

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8020
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 3958

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, AF, KS
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF SOUTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR ON NEW AFGHAN REGIME

REF: KABUL 3486

1. SOUTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR CHOI IS ENCOURAGED ABOUT THE NEW AFGHAN REGIME IN TERMS OF ITS APPARENT DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION OF HIS COUNTRY. DURING DCM'S CALL ON THE AMBASSADOR MAY 14, THE AMBASSADOR SPOKE AT LENGTH ABOUT THE WARM RECEPTION HE RECEIVED FROM BOTH FOREIGN MINISTER AMIN AND CHAIRMAN TARAHI. CHOI'S PICTURE WITH TARAHI WAS ONE OF SEVERAL FEATURED LAST WEEK ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THE IMPORTANT, GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED KABUL TIMES.

2. CHOI SAID THAT SOUTH KOREA EXTENDED DIPLOMATIC RECOGNITION ON MAY 6, THE SAME DAY THAT THE U.S. AND MANY WESTERN COUNTRIES DID. IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER HE REQUESTED APPOINTMENTS WITH THE ABOVE-MENTIONED AFGHAN LEADERS AND WAS ABLE TO SEE THEM BOTH WITHIN THE WEEK. EACH RECEIVED HIM CORDIALLY AND ASKED HIM

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TO CONVEY TO SEOUL THE REGIME'S APPRECIATION FOR ITS ACTION AND THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO RECIPRO-
CATE THE GOOD WISHES EXTENDED. DURING BOTH MEETINGS, THE TWO AFGHAN LEADERS EMPHASIZED THE NONALIGNMENT STANCE OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT AND IMPLIED (WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY SAYING AS MUCH) THAT THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN RECOGNIZED SOUTH KOREA AND

WISHES TO MAINTAIN DIPLOMATIC TIES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. (AFGHANISTAN DOES NOT HAVE A RESIDENT EMBASSY IN EITHER SEOUL OR PYONG YANG).

3. CHOI SAID THAT IN CONTRAST TO SOUTH KOREA'S PROMPT RECOGNITION, THE NORTH KOREANS DID NOT GET AROUND TO IT UNTIL A WEEK LATER. SUBSEQUENTLY, HE HAS SEEN NOTHING IN THE CONTROLLED AFGHAN PRESS INDICATING ANY CALLS BY THE NORTH KOREAN ENVOY ON THE AFGHAN LEADERSHIP. CHOI SAID HE WAS SURE THIS HAS NOT BEEN LOST ON THE NEW AFGHAN GOVERNMENT.

4. CHOI SAID THAT HE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF HIS CALLS TO EXPLAIN THE FACTS OF LIFE ABOUT DIVIDED KOREA AND HIS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON THIS. CHOI THOUGHT AMIN AND TARAHI WERE SYMPATHETIC AND INTERESTED, AND TARAHI RESPONDED BY MAKING A VERY INTERESTING ALLUSION TO AFGHANISTAN'S ALLEGED SIMILAR SITUATION. TARAHI SAID HE WAS SENSITIVE TO THE LOT OF THE KOREAN AND GERMAN PEOPLES (EACH OF THEM DIVIDED), BECAUSE OF THE PARALLELS TO AFGHANISTAN'S LOT, "THE AFGHAN PEOPLE, TOO," TARAHI SAID, "HAVE BEEN DIVIDED BECAUSE OF THE DURAND LINE FOR THE LAST 80 YEARS".

5. COMMENT: FOR THE PRESENT THE SOUTH KOREAN FLAG FLIES OVER THE CHANCERY IN KABUL AND CHOI HOPES IT
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WILL STAY THAT WAY. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT IF INDEED THE NEW AFGHAN REGIME TURNS OUT TO BE COMMUNIST, AND YET MAINTAINS DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SEOUL, IT WILL BE SIGNIFICANT TO SEOUL BECAUSE AT PRESENT NO COMMUNIST COUNTRY ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD RECOGNIZES SOUTH KOREA.
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